

# WORDS & VISION

UCFV Faculty & Staff Association Newsletter

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## From the Editor

### A Tyranny of Glee

A usual, important issues continue to nag. But 'tis the season to be you-know-what again—silly—and I'm really getting into the spirit in a flurry of end-of-term marking. That's right; I'm putting the 'F' back in Xmas, being flagrantly 'festive' at every opportunity.

After all, it is the most important holiday, central to the true meaning of modern life, so much so that we now can celebrate it three hundred and sixty five days a year—at those chock full o' knick-a-brac year-round Xmas stores, the ever-popular pre & post Xmas clearances, and blowout 'Xmas in July' sales. But we can go beyond merely making meaningful purchases at the mall, and pitch in right on the home front. For instance, I'm leaving my talking Santa doorknocker on for good, plus buying a copy of *It's a Wonderful Life*, and letting my multi-function (twinkly, wave motion, flashing, etc.) string of mini-lights blazon forth 'Noël' over the mantlepice from one end of the year to the next.



But is it enough??? Am I truly embracing the lifestyle of Xmas Present? That's the burning question. On the job, I'm wearing my classic reindeer & snowflakes socks, plus a battery-powered Lil' Drummer Boy bowtie (for parumpapumpums at a flick of the wrist). When actually marking papers, I make darn sure students realize that 'F' also stands for 'fun' and 'frolic'. I use red and green pens, together, clutched in one trembling hand, for a seasonal yet

vaguely psychedelic effect. Instead of the standard instructor's happy face stamp, issued by Personnel, I've switched to a red-nosed Rudolf; it looks great with the spray-snow border I put on the bottom of the page ... just to show I care. And you can bet all my students will be getting a singing Jingle Bells card with their returned final projects.

With colleagues, on the other hand, I feel I must be more restrained. This year I may simply add the delectable sugar-spun strains of the Nutcracker Suite to my voice mail, and, of course, employ suitable Xmas emoticons (those cute e-mail symbols for times when you can't express yourself in mere words) in memos wherever possible. Let's see... there's \*(<: o D) Santa going "hohoho" as he guides his sleigh over UCFV; and then here he is crash-landing in Surrey \*(<: o <) due to reindeer error.

As for gift-giving, well, I dunno; it's getting so complicated and difficult, isn't it. Gone are the days

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when you could freely hand out colourful ethnic trinkets from Third World sweat shops, or those hilarious T-shirts that say stuff like "Getting Any?" — I mean, people are sooo sensitive. Perhaps this year I'll try big-print editions of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* with the naughty bits highlighted in red. Or the 'Three Tenors do Nirvana' CD; wouldn't that be nice. Or what about wheat-free tofu angels, fresh-baked, perchance with the added enticement of 100% organic carob chips?...

Anyway, here's a gift of sorts to start things off: another action-packed issue including news, some thought provoking and delightful views, and even a fun questionnaire. As you can see we are experimenting with format, too; what do you think?

To all, good reading and a good night — you sure deserve it.

-Richard Dubanski

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

As a further contribution to geezer chic and well-being, I have a suggestion for a hobby. This hobby can be practiced now—it is one of the few benefits for those of us with a killer commute. Better yet, it will stand us all in good stead when we retire, buy our Winnebagos and cruise the freeways for fun instead of for a salary.

The hobby is wildlife watching. And no, I'm not counting either roadkill or the 'wildlife' who threaten your sanity by not driving exactly the way you think they should drive. You are restricted to walking or flying

creatures large enough to spot with the naked eye (it's a bit tricky to balance the binoculars on the steering wheel).

On the freeway median alone, between the Port Mann and Abbotsford, the careful viewer can spot starlings, red-tailed hawks, herons, crows, and wandering domestic cats and dogs. Extend the search to the grass verges and the nearby fields, and include farm animals. My 'lifetime list' so far includes seagulls, hens, geese, coyotes deer, sheep, cows (at least 3 breeds), horses, a donkey, llamas, and, most recently, ostriches. Extend the trip to Chilliwack and you can add eagles and swans to the list. Head to Mission and you can add red-wing blackbirds. The best viewing by far is in the valley around the 232nd St. exit, especially for coyotes and deer.

If any of my fellow geezers already share this hobby, I'd be interested to know if they've seen any additional species

The ostriches? About 2 km west of the 264th exit.

-Moirra Gutteridge

Ed: Great idea!

## President's Report

"Dashing through the snow to the BC Fed I go" ...

I will contribute a full report in the next issue of *Words & Vision*, but wish you all a fairy, merry Christmas!

-Dale Box

## MOTIONS FROM GENERAL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 21.

**"The FSA membership will not endorse or ratify the facilitator's recommendation for the Multi-institutional Staff Framework Agreement."**

**"The FSA membership instructs the executive to consider the advantages of incorporating specific features of the Multi-institute Staff Framework Agreement into the collective agreement."**

## Second Faculty V.P. Report

**Education Policy Committee  
Meeting October 18 & 19, 1996  
at CIEA**

This meeting was attended by 13 locals as well as four CIEA reps. Ed Lavalley introduced the meeting by outlining the terms of reference for the Education Policy Committee and saying that he perceived its mandate to be, among other things, to produce an updated version of *Profile for the 90s*, outlining CIEA's current position on developments in the post-secondary system. He also indicated the sentiment of the Annual General Meeting was to produce a CIEA document additional to the negotiated *Charting a New Course*.

## Discussion on the Proposed Workplan:

- Do we wish to create a mission and goals statement? (must not be developed in isolation from membership).
- Begin to develop a mission statement for provincial education for the next 20 years.
- Go back to the locals and listen to objections to *Charting a New Course*.
- Face new issues in education.
- Oppose corporatist agenda.
- Examine faculty teaching and working conditions.
- Do comparative analysis, e.g., New Zealand.
- Plan how to activate and motivate the non-involved 95%.

## Possible Directions:

- Paper on selected issues.
- Alternative vision (comprehensive) document.
- Critique of *Charting A New Course*.
- New directions.

In order to ensure wide membership involvement in the development of CIEA positions on education policy, the following motions were passed:

**"That the Education Policy Committee develop in time for the 1997 AGM a paper on selected issues regarding immediate directions within the post-secondary education system."**

-Carried

**"That as a partial fulfilment of the 1996 AGM resolution #38, the Education Policy Committee develop in time for the 1996 AGM a political analysis working paper as a Foundation document for a**

**comprehensive paper on post-secondary education, reflecting faculty's perspective on values, issues and policies and that this working paper be prepared for the 1998 AGM."**

-Carried

The following list of issues was generated for discussion with members in the Locals:

- educational technology
- learning outcomes
- prior learning assessment
- accountability/key performance indicators
- system centralization versus decentralization
- comprehensive/community
- affordability
- privatization
- governance
- education councils
- elected representatives
- faculty evaluations
- union advocacy
- definitions of learner-centred (including learning, teaching conditions)
- education vs. training/relevance
- equity access

Further discussion isolated the following issues as top priorities:

- educational technologies
- learning outcomes
- prior learning assessment
- accountability/key performance indicators
- definition of learner-centred (including learning, teaching conditions)

It was moved that this list of issues be circulated by the Education Policy Committee members in locals in order to determine the key central concerns to focus on the 1997 AGM.

-Vern Wright

# Faculty Grievance Chair Report

## Faculty Evaluation Procedure

Current practice has been brought into line with procedure. Discipline of faculty without benefit of the procedure will be grieved. Department/program heads shall not be expected to interpret data or draft evaluation summaries in most situations. That's the 'old' procedure that's still in force.

A new proposal is being circulated by Peter Jones and Dale Box for consultation.

## Bargaining Agent Violation

UCFV permitted a group of faculty to reformulate their work rules without notifying the FSA, violating Articles 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 20. The remedies we sought were the employer's recognition of the FSA as bargaining agent for UCFV employees and submission of the new arrangements in question to the FSA.

The FSA has no objection to employees redesigning their work rules, but the FSA needs to know about this to ensure that substantial and procedural standards are observed, and that the changes are composed in an authoritative text (letter of agreement) for reference and enforcement. This grievance was sustained.

## Lab Instructors

Some of these employees have and wish to continue offering academic science lecture courses. The Collective Agreement (Article 20.2.2) and its intent stands in their way. The rules against employees

assuming continuous work outside their job classifications applies all over UCFV and is enforced to prevent the employer from hiring at one wage then allocating different work that commands a higher wage.

Lab instructors may offer lecture courses in the same way that any extra work can be done: once the work that's available has gone to those employees who were hired for the purpose, in this case science lecture faculty ('B' and 'r.p.t'), and there is yet surplus work, this unclaimed work is posted. Lab instructors may apply. A SAC then is formed and selects a successful candidate. This process pre-empts most charges of favouritism.

## Student Complaints

I, along with other FSA officers, assisted two program heads who needed to intervene in a situation where students had complaints about an instructor that were proceeding on two fronts: interim complaint policy and harassment policy. A satisfactory resolution was achieved, obviating any need for the FSA to represent the instructor involved in what could easily have turned into interminable proceedings, because the program heads thought to inquire into the rules. The rule in labour management relations is that the employer directs the workforce. Managers act, the FSA reacts when the Agreement or policy is violated. However, it doesn't hurt to run a scenario or questions by the FSA before taking an action.

## Student Workers

During the last meeting of officers, I submitted a compromise that in return for a major concession UCFV could get the student worker

agreement that it wanted. This was based on considerable study following about fifteen meetings with managers who wanted student workers. The compromise proposed failed to find agreement among FSA officers. Now compromise proposals will be presented in our end of November meeting by other officers. I have come to the conclusion that on major issues such as non-union workers, FSA officers need to be directed by the membership and until this is done, officers should simply apply the Collective Agreement and leave it to the employer to demand contract concessions when negotiations commence this winter.

-Bob Smith

## Staff Grievance Chair Report

### Hot Topic

Staff Framework Agreement: Will we ratify? I doubt it, and it doesn't look like any of the other players (BCGEU, CUPE, etc.) will either. For our money UCFV staff are better off sticking with the faculty agreement. The compensation package is better (tiny, little raise) and everything else is about the same.

### Hotter Topic

Staff Hirings: Many staffers are feeling UCFV's hiring practices are unfair in that external candidates are being picked over good internal candidates. UCFV, on the other hand, argues they have a good record of promoting from within especially over the last year. It is true that most

of the postings have been filled from within, but these positions tend to be the lower level ones. Positions rated six or higher are more likely to go to an external.

It's not that we don't have qualified people who meet the criteria of the upper level postings: the collective agreement is the problem. The following article is a perfect example:

**14.4(a) The College encourages the concept of a career ladder. An employee who applies for and meets the criteria of a vacant position shall be given preference over an outside applicant who is equally or less able to meet the criteria of the position.**

"The College encourages the concept of a career ladder." Now that statement certainly leaves the door wide open to interpretation. As to the rest of the article, it means an over-qualified external can be given the job over an internal who has all the qualifications asked for. Doesn't that seem a little bizarre? Because no matter who you are, from the staff two's and three's up through faculty and management to the President, there will always be someone out there more qualified if you look hard enough.

If an internal meets the criteria then she/he should be given the job. There is no need to ever interview external candidates. This practice would go a long way to improving morale around here.

### The Hottest (this one is going to be a scorcher)

Student Workers: The two sides of this issue are so far apart it's going to be a hard-fought battle. And this

isn't union against employer either, not yet anyway. This debate is raging within the membership.

The student worker dispute actually began in the fall of '95 when the FSA claimed its right to reduce non-union hirings in response to impending lay-offs due to funding cutbacks.

Our decision was a hasty one, made, unfortunately, without consulting the departments who employ student (non-union) workers. However, in our defence, we were desperate to find ways of saving jobs. Rumours were rampant; there was talk of cutbacks as high as 10%. Every day members were calling or coming into the office depressed and afraid for their jobs. Emotions were running high. What was the union going to do for them? We had to come up with ideas to protect our members, particularly those not protected by the two-year seniority no lay-off clause.

If UCFV were in fact going to start laying members off in the spring of 96, how could they justify that action while still employing non-union labour?. Restraint on student hires was one solution to the problem, especially in the instances where students were doing FSA designated work.

As I mentioned earlier, our decision was a hasty one and it infuriated some of the faculty who hire student workers. They argued it would be impossible to carry out their present level of service without the cheap student labour. Furthermore, they argued that student workers have always been part of college life and by interfering with student hires we, the FSA, were undermining the very organization of their departments.

Since last August, this dispute has intensified. We are still dealing with the fundamental issues of students doing FSA designated work and the potential of member lay-offs while student workers remain. But now we are also debating such issues as:

- is cheap student labour immoral?
- should student workers be in or out of the bargaining unit?
- should we create a student worker pay grade, better than minimum wage, and strictly monitor the types of work student workers are allowed to do?

All of these hot issues will be discussed, debated and disputed over the next few weeks at either the General Meeting or the executive table or both. If you have ideas, opinions or comments, please give us a call.

**Warm and Fuzzy Topic  
(because it makes Fenella and me so happy)**

Staff Question & Answer Information sessions: The lunch sessions have been a success. Attendance has been good—averaging about 15 people a session. Our discussion leaders, Fay Hyndman, Dale Box, Karen Power, Barry Bompas and Kasey Alger all did a terrific job, and I would like to thank them. We've had nine sessions so far, which cover the following:

- overtime, leaves and committee work
- PD Allocations
- JCAC
- Staff Framework Agreement

The next sessions on benefits and pensions will be held in Chilliwack

on December 10, 12:00 noon, Room D218, and in Abbotsford on December 12, 12:00 noon, in Room G159. Barry Bompas and Sue Samuelson will be leading the discussions.

We will be continuing these sessions in the new year. If there is a topic you would like information on, please call me at local 4449 or 2498.

See you at the Christmas Dinner and Dance!

-Bev Lowen

## Learning Outcomes: The 'Grassy Knoll' of Post-Secondary Education?

I suppose it shouldn't be much of a surprise that the provincial government is advocating a 'Learning Outcomes Approach' in evaluating post-secondary institutions. After all, this approach fits with a ministry entitled the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training that established both the Outcomes Working Group and the Accountability Working Group to prepare the College System Performance Report.

According to its proponents, a learning outcomes approach is said to be a different, and an improved, way of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of post-secondary education (or should I say post secondary learning?). Clearly rooted in systems theory, this approach conceptualizes post-secondary education as the



blending of educational inputs (e.g., people and buildings) with activities (e.g., curriculum and programs) to produce learning outcomes. These learning outcomes can be assessed in the short-term by such measures as number of students completing a course or program. In the long-term, educational outcome measures can include such things as employment status of students in their field of study and gross monthly salary.

This learning outcomes approach fits neatly into a systems approach to post-secondary education that makes distinctions between Universities, University Colleges, Colleges, and Institutes in relation to their mandates within the system. These distinctions are then translated into practices such as a centralized student application process, limiting the availability of seats in high demand programs because of job specific employment projections, mandatory post graduation employment readiness training mandated by the provincial government, and so forth.

What is also clear is that the colleges and institutes are being ranked in terms of outcome measures.

Results of a learning outcomes study conducted by the provincial ministry were recently sent to UCFV for review and comment. For this study, a sample of graduates from 19 colleges and institutes in B.C. were surveyed on their learning outcomes. Contacted graduates were asked about their current employment status, whether their employment was related to their training, gross salary, satisfaction with the level of specific skills training (e.g., written communication, interpersonal skills, analysis/problem solving, etc.), satisfaction with their college experience (e.g., quality of teaching, practical experience) and overall

satisfaction. In total, 37 outcome measures were employed.

The information sent to UCFV reports on the overall aggregate results for the 'system' (the 19 institutions) and those specific to our University College. What is particularly interesting is the ranking assigned to UCFV's learning outcome results in relation to the other 18 institutions. At first glance, the ranking data indicates that UCFV is **below average** (is that a 'C' or a 'B'?) in 27 of the 37 outcome measures. We rank about average on 2 of the 37 and above the system average on 8 of the 37 measures.

However, the ranking statistics currently being circulated by the ministry are virtually meaningless. In 19 out of the 37 outcome measures used in the study, UCFV's results are 1% from the system average. In 30 of the 37 measures, UCFV's results are within 5% of the system average. Considering that these results were drawn from a sample of graduates, they also fall within the margin of error you get when you sample from a larger population. Other problems exist with the measurement scale used to collect information and the statistics employed to describe the results. All in all, the only observation you should draw from the data is that all 19 institutions in the study scored about the same on the 37 measures.

The imposition of a learning outcomes approach to assessing post-secondary education is controversial at the best of times. However, during periods of restricted finance for post-secondary education, the use of a learning outcomes model can be down right nefarious. In a closed system, funding could be channelled to the more 'efficient' institutions or

programs. FTE's could be reassigned to employment-driven curriculum. Courses, programs, and/or degrees that do not keep pace with learning outcomes could become, at best, service courses for more 'efficient' programs.

Indeed, the above scenario could take hold within individual institutions themselves. But, that probably wouldn't happen, would it? The last thing I would like to be accused of is being too conspiratorial. Anyway, I have to go out and cut the lawn on the grassy knoll.

-Doug King

## It's Not Easy Being God

It's not easy being God. Perhaps I should rephrase that: it's not easy playing God. The responsibility can sometimes be too great, particularly when trapped twenty feet in the air on the trembling platform of a peripatetic forklift truck. But that's where I am, giving my all, on Friday, November 10, 1995 at 8:05 p.m. precisely. It's the opening night of OUR B.C. premiere of *The Mysteries*, English poet Tony Harrison's adaptation of the medieval morality plays, works originally created and compiled by the merchant guilds of 13th century England.

I'm waiting nervously backstage, to be wheeled on, in all my glory, by a skittish, machine-shy stagehand. What the hell am I doing here?! That's the question I keep asking myself as I repeat my opening lines over and over again, in a desperate attempt at ritual reassurance:

*Ego sum alpha et omega  
Vita, via, veritas  
Primus et novissimus!*

Well, no doubt that's easy to say when you are omniscient and omnipresent; but when you're the Deus at the mercy of a temperamental Machina on an anxiety-ridden opening night—I'm sure you get the picture. Yes, it's a tough job—er, role and somebody has to play it; and I, for my sins, have been chosen. My platform shudders and makes a sudden infinitesimal drop earthwards. It is probably almost undetectable from an audience point of view. From the point of view of an actor who has three enormous monologues in the first act, it is the theatrical equivalent of the Chinese water torture.

I pace my tiny platform that is bestrewn with coloured streamers, awaiting the magic moment when the curtains and theatre doors before me will open and I will glide forward on a billowing cloud of dry ice into the blinding light of creation. I look down at the two black-clad assistant stage managers holding the curtains on each side of my contraption as they happily twirl and bounce to the warm-up music being played onstage by our five piece band. These two dancing devas smile encouragingly up at me. I envy their playful abandon, temporarily lost in the joy of the moment, as they wait to shepherd a far from omnipotent deity into this place of timeless beginnings.

The music stops and I grip the side of my platform in nervous anticipation. The imperial fanfare begins and the doors swing open as I am trundled into the light. But what light? There's trouble in paradise! The house lights are still up; the blinding light of creation has not yet materialized to crown my entrance.

The first sight I see through the dry ice clouds—at least one aspect of my powers is being manifested—is the silhouette of our lighting designer hurtling towards the control-booth at warp speed. Now the illuminated faces of the audience stare back at me, where once there was only comforting blackness. They seem blissfully unaware of the emergency taking place in their midst. The stagehand steering my carriage, clearly unhinged by this turn of events, steers perilously close to the trapdoor that will later open up to provide a pathway for the descent of Lucifer into Hell. At the last moment he regains his composure and a stunning revision of biblical history is miraculously avoided by about three inches. I imagine the reviewer's headline in the morning paper: ***Mysteries production breaks ground with innovative concept that sets theological orthodoxy on its head.*** In the ensuing twenty seconds, that seem to last twenty years, I enter and experience a strange, calm, almost surreal state, as the previous six weeks of rehearsals flash past my inner eye in a process resembling a near-death experience.

How do you present such momentous events as the creation of the world, the Fall, exile from Paradise, and the Flood in a 206 seat theatre, in approximately two hours? Well, with a certain amount of difficulty, a lot of imagination, and a great deal of hard work from a cast and crew of theatre students, staff, faculty and local musicians.

As flashbacks from the complicated creative process that makes up a theatrical production parade in mad staccato images before my inner eye, one image stands out in bold relief and demands attention.

It is the evening of the Quebec

referendum vote. It is also the date of our final technical rehearsal, an event that routinely strikes fear and foreboding into the hearts of the most seasoned thespians. It is, as always, a gruelling affair, lasting from 7 p.m. to 2:30 a.m., as we iron out as many technical problems as possible before the first dress rehearsal. As we work, snippets of information come through, gleaned surreptitiously from a radio in the green room. The see-saw progress of the vote adds to the stress experienced on stage. We all leave the theatre in the early hours of the morning doubly drained and with a strange sense of anti-climax. We have the makings of a good show now; we all can feel it, and most of the technical problems have been worked out. We still have a country, too, by the skin of our teeth, but with many nagging problems still to be worked out. Our production will run for three weeks. How long, I wonder, as I drive home through blinding rain, will our nation hold together?

Abruptly the house lights dim, and a wool-gathering deity is jolted back into the present. The intrusive faces of a full house audience disappear and I'm enveloped in the warm, comforting glow of my special lighting, as the fork-lift conveys me noisily heavenwards for a chat with my angelic throng.

I am gracious and great,  
God without beginning  
I am maker unmade  
all might is in me -  
I am life and way unto wealth  
winning!

Etc. etc. etc. I have about another three hundred lines in a similar vein. Satan, of course, has all the best lines but then the villain usually does; it's almost a dramatic axiom. I, however, do have some consolation: I always manage to have the last word.



After our initial problem the performance proceeds without a hitch. I create the heavens and the earth, pass over a petulant Gabriel for Lucifer as my second in command—well, nobody's perfect—banish the jealous rebel to hell when I realize my mistake, usher Adam and Eve into Paradise and usher them out again when I realize they too have let me down. The list continues: Cain, Abel, Noah, the Flood, and the first act ends with the testing of the loyalty of the patriarch Abraham and the lifting of the death sentence on his son Isaac. For some oblique reason God is not required again until the Nativity scene at the end of the second act. The break is appreciated and I'm able to reappear, refreshed and in good voice, to give my fatherly blessing on the birth of my redeeming son.

The whole cast parades on stage for this final scene and shares a celebratory carol in which the audience is invited to join in. Then, in a final bonding gesture, the cast disperses into the midst of the unsuspecting crowd, drawing many surprised and protesting patrons on stage for a final dance. It's a warm, festive feeling that's been generated; and as I look down from my elevated vantage point at the spinning couples beneath me I feel an irresistible urge to dance myself, up here alone on my platform. And so I do, lifting the golden skirts of my flowing robe to reveal the jeans and workboots beneath (I am, after all, a working man's God). I attempt, with mixed success, a fractured hybrid prance, somewhere between an Irish jig and a Michael Jackson moon walk, and become, for a short while, a gyrating, impromptu Lord of the Dance, as I let the music have its wanton way with me.

As we dance, the real heavens above us open up and a deluge of

biblical proportions beats down on the theatre roof in a loud, frenzied cacophony. After the dancing and the subsequent applause ends, I explain to the audience that I had issued strict commandments that we would have only fair weather for an opening night performance, but find that I receive little respect these days from the elements or my acolytes. It gets a laugh, and the audience, cast and crew file out into the foyer for the opening night reception. I'm last to head for the wine and canapes; I've further to descend before I can come to earth, literally and figuratively. It gives me time to reflect: where does an actor go from here? what other role could compare with—well, the ultimate one? Of course it will look great on my CV, but will it all be downhill from here on? Will every other role now have a faint tincture of second best?

In a recent production of *The Mysteries*, in the city of York in England, the role of God—or should I say the Goddess, was played by a woman. It was a brilliant theatrical innovation on the part of the director that caused theological ructions and howls of complaint from the Elders of the Protestant and Catholic churches. I quite like the idea: it takes some of the pressure off us male thespians. Because, you know, it's not easy being—er, playing God. But it can be quite rewarding, and a great deal of fun too!

-Rick Mawson



## Review: Filmfest 96

My favourite movie from this year's Vancouver International Film Festival was *Anything Can Happen*, all of 40 minutes long. One of those irresistible six-year-old boys that, to quote a character in George Orwell (not 1984), "makes your bowels yearn" is at large in a Warsaw park, and when he isn't chasing butterflies or just standing still drinking in the sunshine, he's walking up to adults on benches and asking them questions. Of an enormously fat man he asks, "Why is your head so big?" Of a late-middle-aged couple who come every day, he asks, "Why do you always come here? Don't you have any kids? Why not?" And of an ancient, wrinkled, solitary woman: "Where are your friends? Are you going to die soon?"

As adults, we have learned that there are certain 'personal' questions you don't even ask your friends, never mind perfect strangers, and I can imagine sitting on a park bench myself and wanting to murder a little pest like this, had he been other than this particular boy, this Tomek. But such was the utter innocence of Tomek's interviewing that it brought out the best in the interviewees (if there were any gruff responses they wound up on the cutting room floor), and to the great credit of all the adults, they took this kid seriously, invited him to sit down, and did their best to give him serious answers. The old woman, it turned out, was indeed so lonely, and so close to dying, that she began to weep, and finally, in sheer self-defence, said, "This interview is over." What triggered this, it seemed, was not so much her speaking aloud the truth that she *was* going to die, as Tomek's own thoughtful truth that maybe she was *not*: "Anything can happen!"

The film was certainly not scripted, and the whole thing was shot from a considerable distance through a telephoto lens to make it feel like a certain kind of 'hidden camera' documentary. On the other hand, the sound recording was very clear, and Tomek turns out to be the son of the director, Marcel Lozinski, and was doubtless turned loose with an agenda. Did the people on the park benches know they were being filmed? If they did, were their responses slightly disingenuous?

Who cares. This was the real thing. It is no small feat, especially in 40 minutes, to capture the debate between a view that anything is possible and a view that nothing is, and to grant both views, somehow, their dignity. Little lamb, who made thee?

The sad thing about the festival is that this is the sort of film that will never be seen by anyone reading this review. Here's another one that won't, another documentary, a feature-length biology movie called *Death by Design*. It's about cells: more precisely, about a phenomenon called 'programmed cell death' which, my UCFV informant tells me, is currently *hot*.

But can a science movie, at an art film festival, be hot? Yes, it can. For one thing, the big-screen microcinematography is stunning. Look at those fellers squirm and writhe; appear and disappear in the blue depths of the sky, as Yeats said of the magi.

For another thing, the basic premise of programmed cell death is that individual cells are designed to commit suicide in the survival interests of the organism as a whole, and the filmmakers drew funny but pointed sociological parallels by

cutting to various images of human mobs and crowds, not the least political of which was a time-lapse overhead shot of the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

The most engaging part of the film, though, was an ongoing series of interviews with five biologists—one French, one German, three American—all of whom, while revealing that they were perfectly aware of the irony of making a feature film whose principal characters were cells, projected an air of utter fascination with their research, and an absolute teacherly devotion to the principle of getting the message out as clearly as possible. (This film should be required viewing at the next conference of the Learned Societies: far from raising cells to the level of dramatic characters, contemporary literary criticism, at least, seems intent on reducing King Lear to a subatomic particle.)

One more documentary, and then, as my students say when they run out of gas after 700 words of a 1500-word essay, in the interests of brevity I must cease. The troubles in Northern Ireland seem doomed to go on forever. Against this, a remarkable first film, *A Leap of Faith*, by Jenifer McShane and Tricia Regan, one American, one Irish. The leap of faith of the title is also a leap *across* the Christian faith, as it has become (exclusively) defined by extremist Protestants and Catholics. The film documents the heroic (and successful) efforts of a small group of parents and teachers to establish a religiously integrated elementary school in Belfast, against all odds.

If Stan Persky's recent review of Benjamin Barber's book *Jihad vs. McWorld* is to be believed, one of our few remaining arenas for genuine

political activity, in a world increasingly polarized into transnational corporatism on the one hand and fundamentalist tribalism on the other, is what Barber calls "civil space," where ordinary people get together at the local level and work their butts off to get things done. The film spends all its time in the company of these devoted folks (and their kids), and it's the best antidote I've seen in a long time for creeping political cynicism. The most encouraging feature of this story emerges out of the saddest: the idea that only in the next generation is there any real hope for sectarian peace.

-Graham Dowden

## In the Halls of Academe

### Two Victoria Students Buying & Selling Essays—with the help of Federal Money

Two University of Victoria students have used federal money to form a business buying and selling essays, something they admit may be exploited by cheats.

But Ritu Mahil and Jason Young said their company doesn't advocate or support plagiarism.

"There are going to be some people who use it for that purpose, but that's not why we set up the business," said Young, a fourth-year political science student.

"I don't see how we're creating more opportunity for that." Young said the business is an educational resource of students helping other students. The pair got \$3,000 from a

summer student loan program to help launch Undergraduate Resource Library, URL for short. The program, offered through the Business Development Bank of Canada, provided advice and interest-free loans for three months.

The company operates through an Internet web site where students can read summaries of papers and see what grade the papers received. URL also rates the essays on various factors.

Most essays available so far are in History, English and Political Science and cost \$30 to \$60.

Mahil and Young haven't decided how the seller will be paid, either by a flat fee or percentage.

Already at least 50 papers from University of Victoria students are listed and about the same from outside, including Ohio, Florida, and Washington state, said Mahil, a first-year law student.

Bill Gordon, a mathematics professor who heads the university's senate committee on academic standards, said some students turn in other people's work as their own. The degree of abuse is difficult to

assess because each instructor and department deals with the problem separately, he said.

Penalties at the University of Victoria range from having to redo the assignment to suspension.

"A business such as URL, makes it easier for those disposed to cheat, but it's not clear it will significantly increase the number disposed to cheating," Gordon said.

*-Canadian Press*



The stocking stuffer that keeps on stuffing

### ***Comforts & Joy***

get the official UCFV cookbook  
at the Bookstore

*You should have received one of these in your mailbox already.  
If you haven't seen it or haven't filled it in, please do it now,  
and send it to the FSA office.*

## COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT 1997

### *Survey of Needs*

*Please complete both sides of this page and return it to the FSA office by December 17th.*

Last spring we asked your consent to accept the provincial Faculty Framework Agreement, and later this fall we will probably be asking a similar question for the Staff Framework Agreement. These agreements tie us to a provincially-negotiated deal on compensation and workload.

Now we're coming to you to ask for help in deciding what to negotiate when our own agreement expires in March 1997.

What's left to negotiate, you ask?

Our commitment is to protect and enhance the jobs of our members, and in this economic climate that means making it possible for everyone now on staff to maintain their position. We can't negotiate salary, total benefit package, or overall workload. All of those are now governed by the provincial agreement.

But we can and should negotiate all the internal details that make that agreement liveable. For example:

Do you want stronger language to prefer internal candidates for jobs? \_\_\_\_\_

Do faculty want language to protect our existing class sizes that are under 35? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want stronger language on regularization for RPTs? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to see inclusion of auxiliaries in the bargaining unit, with limited rights? \_\_\_\_\_

What else would you want to see?

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What would you definitely **not** want to see?

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The Collective Agreement does have some provisions for flexibility of work. Are there any additional arrangements we could make for flexible working conditions that would make your present workload easier to achieve? Such as:

- Staff:** - easier job sharing or task sharing, more flexible workdays/schedules  
**Faculty:** - limits to committee time and responsibility, more flexible arrangements for handling course loads.

Your suggestions and comments:

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**THESE ARE THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN THE BOOKLET YOU RECEIVED WITH  
YOUR CONTRACT SURVEY**

1. Union Members are b, c, f, g, i (Article 2.1)
2. Long Term Disability, Life Insurance, Educational Leave, Maternity Leave, General Leave, Political Leave, Layoff and bumping (See Article 31.5 for complete list.)
3. (b) for the faculty member (Article 20.2.5)  
(d) & (f) for staff (Article 19.9, 19.5.3b)
4. 30 working days (6 calendar weeks) (Article 26.4)
5. a) the employee pays (Article 30.5)  
b) Article 30.6c
6. a) 15 months from the date of layoff (Article 18.8a)  
b) No (Article 18.8e)
7. a) 3 years of continuous employment or the equivalent. (Article 24.3b(i))  
b) 4 additional paid types of leave: court appearances, maternity leave, general leave, and special leave (which has 5 sub-types).  
(Two other types of leave - association leave and political leave - are unpaid.)  
(See Article 26.)
8. a) annually (Article 15.3a)  
b) one month before notice must be given (Article 15.3.c)  
c) two months before the end of classes in the teaching year. (Article 15.3c)
9. Withholding or withdrawing an increment (Article 16.3)
10. a) 10 days (Article 7.3a)  
b) The supervisor and grievance chair. The employee may attend but is not required to. (Article 7.3a)



# WORDS & VISION

## THE COVER STORY

### NATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The National Journal of the Environment is a leading source of information on environmental issues. It covers a wide range of topics, including air and water pollution, land use, and natural resources. The journal is published by the National Academy of Sciences, which is a prestigious organization that provides expert advice to the government. The journal is known for its high quality and its focus on scientific research. It is a must-read for anyone interested in environmental issues.

## IN WOMEN'S

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## **DECEMBER 6TH**

### **NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**

The **ROSE BUTTON**, designed by artist Joss McLennan, was created to honour this day, and in particular, to commemorate the 14 young women killed in Montreal on December 6, 1989.

**Violence against women is NOT JUST A WOMEN'S ISSUE.** It is a societal issue that affects women, men and children alike. We can all contribute to making our society a healthy one by supporting anti-violence work in our communities.

Last year hundreds of people around the Fraser Valley bought buttons and attended the many candlelight vigils organized by women's groups and the FSA Status of Women Committee.

This year we will again be coordinating activities around the Valley. In Chilliwack, at 12.:00 noon at the Museum Site by the Cenotaph, at Abbotsford at 2:00 pm, at the Court House, S. Fraser Way, and in Mission at 5:00 pm in front of the Library. Please watch for posters and the sale of buttons and calendars. Please support our endeavours to raise awareness of violence and to end this violence against women.

**14 WOMEN DIED  
IN MONTREAL  
DECEMBER 6, 1989.**

**THERE WERE 15 HOMICIDES OF WOMEN  
FROM 1993-1995  
IN THE FRASER VALLEY.**

**FIRST MOURN.  
THEN WORK FOR CHANGE.**